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SUBJECT: WEEKLY NEPAL MEDIA REPORT: AUGUST 26
TO SEPTEMBER 2, 2003

-STATE FOR NP, AC, PM
-STATE FOR IN/R/MR
-STATE FOR SA/INS, PM/CBM, PM/PRO
-STATE FOR SA/PPD

11. MAOISTS BREAK CEASEFIRE

-- Maoi sts break cease - fire , blame government :
The Maoi sts un i latera l ly broke of f (8/27) the seven-month-old cease-fire and the subsequent peace process with the government "for the time being" saying it had lost its relevance while blaming the government for it. The government described the Maoists' announcement of the collapse of the peace talks as a serious setback to efforts to resolve the Maoist problem, but reiterated its commitment to finding a peaceful resolution by discussing all available alternatives. (Compiled from major dailies, 8/28)

-- Prime Minister ready to resume talks: Prime Minister Thapa has said that the government was ready to resume talks with the Maoists despite their unilateral announcement of the break off of the ceasefire. According to a representative of Civil Society who met the Prime Minister, PM Thapa was ready to lift the terrorist tag put on the Maoists if they came back to negotiating table. (Centrist "Spacetime Dainik," V/D, 9/1)

-- No emergency: Minister of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Sarbendra Math Shukla has said that the government will not impose emergency in the country. ("Spacetime Dainik," 9/1)

-- Government to enforce entry permit system: The government is preparing to enforce entry permit requirement to the three districts of the Kathmandu valley. With the enforcement of the entry permit system, more than five people cannot assemble at one place. ("Spacetime Dainik," 9/10)

-- U.S. and British envoys suggest reconciliation: The U.S. and British ambassadors, Michael E. Malinowski and Keith Bloomfield, told (8/31) Nepali Congress President Girija Prasad Koirala to unite with the monarchy and government to fight the Maoist insurgency. Both ambassadors opined that the Maoist insurgency was the greater problem facing the country rather than the royal intervention of October 4, 2002. The two ambassadors gave similar advice last week to Madhav Kumar Nepal, general secretary of the UML. (Centrist "Kathmandu Post," E/D, 9/1)
-- Need to agree on new constitution: Nepal s conflict may not be contained unless we agree on a new constitution. It is a critical but a democratic choice. (Op-ed by senior political scientist in pro-India "Himalayan Times," E/D, 9/1)

-- PM addresses nation: Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa in an address to the nation on 8/29 appealed to the agitating political parties to postpone their agitation considering the gravity of the situation developed after the Maoists breached the seven-month ceasefire. Thapa underlined the government s commitment to foil all sorts of violent actions targeted at the popular sovereignty, multiparty democracy and constitutional monarchy at all cost. Political parties have flayed the public statement of Prime Minister Thapa, saying that he was nowhere near the solution. They have also firmly said that their announced movement from September 4 would not stop. (Media

reports, 8/30)

-- Peace facilitators relieved: Following the violation of the seven-month ceasefire by the Maoists, the government relieved (8/29) the facilitators of the peace talks from their responsibility. ("The Kathmandu Post" and others, 8/30)

-- Thousands march with anti-war slogans: More than 50,000 schoolchildren, accompanied by

parents, teachers and businessmen strode through the streets of Kathmandu fighting the scorching heat and humidity and holding banners that read "We want peace, War does not help, Peace is mandatory." ("The Kathmandu Post," 8/30)

-- Road ahead: The road ahead can be expected to be hard and difficult, and if the government (political parties) are to go on yielding ground, it would be best to hand over power to the Maoists. Then at least we will have a lasting peace of grave. (Op-ed by former editor of The Kathmandu Post in the Post, 8/30)

-- Maoists urged by one and all to restart peace talks: The United States and the European Union (EU) mission in Kathmandu today "deplored" (8/28) the Maoists' decision to call off the cease-fire by and urged the party to resume peace negotiations immediately. Similarly, China and Japan expressed concern and regret over the setback suffered by the peace process and urged for an early resumption of the peace process. The U.S. accused the Maoists of ignoring the overwhelming support within Nepal and the international community for a negotiated settlement of a senseless conflict, which has already claimed thousands of Nepali lives and disrupted efforts to develop Nepal's economic and political infrastructure. Expressing its belief that the conflict could only be settled through peaceful and democratic means, the U.S. urged the Maoists to restore the cease-fire and resume the negotiation process. Similarly, issuing a statement here today, the EU "deeply deplored" the unilateral suspension of the cease-fire by the Maoist leadership." (Media reports, 8/29)

-- Government declares Maoists terrorists: Within 12 hours of Maoist attack on two army colonels, the government declared the Maoists terrorists and any organization affiliated with them as terrorist outfits. (Government-owned Nepal Television and Radio Nepal, 8/28).

"The government declares the Maoists terrorists again. The U.S., agreeing indirectly to this decision, has indicated that it may revise the "Terrorist Watch List" and put the Maoists on the list of International Terrorist List" (Centrist "Kantipur," V/D, 8/29)

-- Curfew in six districts: Curfew was imposed in and around Udaypur, Ramechhap, Baglung, Dhading, Rukum and Tehrathum district headquarters Thursday evening. (Media reports, 8/29)

12. FIVE PARTIES "DECISIVE" MOVEMENT

-- UML to reconsider movement: We might consider reviewing our 18-point agenda after meeting with the king, said UML general secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal. ("Kantipur,"

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9/1)

-- The government has started a shameful campaign to jeopardize the movement against regression. However, the five parties are determined to bring the capital to a standstill. (Leftist "Chhalphal," V/W, 8/31)

-- Maoists to support movement: The Maoists have announced their support for the decisive movement by the five political parties. (Centrist "Rajdhani," V/D, 9/1)

-- Thousands of students from across the country are set to converge in Kathmandu this week to muster up support for the September 4

"decisive" struggle planned by the major political parties. ("Kantipur," 8/26)

-- The government is going to launch a high security check system from the first week of September, keeping in mind the five parties "decisive" movement and Maoists' possible pull out from talks, an announcement said Monday. (Nepalnews.com, 8/26)

13. SECURITY FORCE, MAOIST CLASHES . MAOIST VIOLENCE

-- Clashes leave 19 dead: At least nine security personnel and 10 Maoist rebels were killed in the latest incidents of encounters and shootings in different parts of the country. (Media reports, 9/1)

-- 217 VIPs on hit list : A reliable police source told The Katmandu Post that the residences of 217 VIPs suspected of featuring in the Maoists hit list have been tightly secured. Security has been tightened in the residences of high-ranking government officials, former officials, political figures, former politicians, diplomats, party offices of major political parties and vulnerable public areas. (Media reports, 8/31)

-- Maoists unleash terror wave: On Friday (8/29), the Maoists shot at Former Minister of State for Home Devendra Raj Kandel at his home, bombed Finance Minister Dr. Prakash Chandra Lohani's ancestral house in Nuwakot district and robbed about Rs. 2.5 million cash from a branch office of the Nepal Bank Limited in Parsa. (Media reports, 8/30)

-- Maoists turn violent, shoot army official: In two separate shooting incidents in the capital Thursday morning, the Maoists shot dead a Royal Nepal Army (RNA) colonel and seriously injured another. The attacks came a day after the unilateral withdrawal of ceasefire by the Maoists on Wednesday. Meanwhile, the U.S. Embassy, Kathmandu denounced the terrorist attacks by the Maoists against the two RNA colonels. In a statement, the Embassy termed these attacks as demonstrating the Maoists rejection of the Nepali people's overwhelming call for peace and the Maoists continuous willingness to resort to brutality to achieve their objectives. (Media reports, 8/29)

-- Maoists rob bank in pang: A group of Maoists shot the bank manager and robbed a branch office of Rastriya Banijya Bank in Tulsipur, pang Thursday. (Media reports, 8/29)

-- Maoists' 3-day Nepal shut down: After being labeled terrorists again, the Maoists Thursday announced a 3-day countrywide general strike starting September 18. (Media reports, 8/29)

-- Maoists abduct three CPN-UML cadres: The Maoists yesterday abducted former vice chairman, area member and former ward chairman in Makwanpur district and took them to an unknown place. (The Kathmandu Post, 8/28)

-- Maoists shot dead three police personnel and abducted three in Sarlahi and Mahottari districts, on Tuesday. (Media reports, 8/27)

-- Maoists attack Former Prime Minister: Former Prime Minister and President of Nepali Congress (Democratic) Sher Bahadur Deuba escaped unscathed from an attempt on his life by the Maoists in west Nepal on 8/25. (Media reports, 8/26). The Maoists said that the incident was a mistake. A Maoist press statement said that the peoples army in their pursuit to finish off the security force of the "old regime" did not know that the occupant of the vehicle happened to be Deuba. Diplomatic missions in Kathmandu condemned and expressed concern over the attack on him. Issuing a statement, the United States Embassy in Kathmandu strongly condemned the attack on Deuba. ("The Kathmandu Post," 8/27)

-- An alleged group of Maoists set fire on Everest Paper Factory in Dhanusha district

damaging property of million rupees on Sunday night. (Media reports, 8/26)

-- 10 Maoists killed as army men return fire: 10 Maoists, seven in Panchthar and 3 in Darchula districts, were killed when security forces counterattacked in self defense after armed Maoists attacked joint security forces on regular patrol on 8/27, the Ministry of Defense said. (Government-owned "Rising Nepal," E/D, 8/28)

-- Maoists kill 3 policemen, ex-minister's house bombed: Three policemen were killed on the spot and one seriously injured when a group of armed Maoists attacked them in Siraha district on 8/27, district police office stated. Meanwhile, a band of Maoists set fire to the police post in Udaypur district on Wednesday. ("The Rising Nepal," 8/28)

-- NHRC committee on Doramba killings: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) today appointed separate inquiry commissions to probe the Doramba incidents that killed 19 Maoists, a NHRC press release said here today. The British Embassy and other diplomatic missions had been pressing for a probe on Doramba killings. ("The Kathmandu Post," 8/27) Around 10 Maoists were shot dead in two-hour-long exchange of fire between the army and the rebels at Shera rivet area of Nauthar VDC in Lamjung Monday morning. (Nepalnews.com, 8/26)

14. BHUTANESE REFUGEES

-- Include UNHCR or face aid cuts: The UNHCR and the World Food Program (WFP) have warned the governments of Nepal and Bhutan of slashing foreign aid should they fail to include the UNHCR as third party mediator in resolving the Bhutanese refugee crisis. ("The Kathmandu Post," 8/31)

15. OTHERS

-- Generalized AIDS epidemic imminent, says activists: Keeping in view Nepal's abject poverty and the available treatment being beyond the reach of common people, the country might be heading towards a generalized AIDS epidemic from a concentrated one, HIV/AIDS activists warned today. The scariest part of the situation in the country is that 97 per cent of the HIV infected people are between ages 15 to 19, said the country director for POLICY project of the USAID, Bhoj Raj Pokharel, addressing a press interaction on AIDS and STD control held by the American Center. (Media reports, 8/30)

MALINOWSKI